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The Hartford convention. 1823



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A
SHORT ACCOUNT

OF THE

Hartford Convention,

TAKEN FROM OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS,

AND

ADDRESSED TO THE FAIR MINDED AND THE
WELL DISPOSED.

TO WHICH IS ADDED

AN ATTESTED COPY

OF THE

SECRET JOURNAL OF THAT BODY.

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By Theodore Hyman

By Theodore Hyman

ACCOUNT

OF THE

HARTFORD CONVENTION.

MR. OTIS was a member of the Hartford Convention. This is the text, paraphrase and commentary, in all its forms and readings, of all the reproaches, imputations, misstatements, and misrepresentations, now proclaimed and promulgated against the federal candidate for Governor. An objection of the same sort was circulated with even greater vehemence and virulence against Governor Brooks. Though not a member, he was said, in the language of a well-known democratic* paper, to have been the "*idol of that body*," and to have been designated by them as the leader of the "*rebel army*," that was to have executed its treasonable plans. And it is obvious that the same objection would also be uttered against any other candidate, who was a member of the Legislature, which

* We do not use this word in any other sense than that of designating one of the great political parties of this country. We make this explanation because it is not the purpose of this "Short Account," to cast hasty and indiscriminate reproaches upon the great body of any party. Our simple and single purpose is to present to the people of this State a brief history and vindication of the proceedings of one party upon a most momentous occasion.

called the Convention, or any distinguished individual who had approved of its measures. To all persons of sense and information, who were grown up to manhood at the time of the Convention, the unfounded and unceasing accusations thrown broad-cast upon the members of that body, and renewed at every election during eight years, have now become insipid and worthless, and are utterly worn to the thread. [All such persons well and truly know, that whatever took place at that time, was done not only in the face of the broadest day, but in the face of the political adversary; that it was proclaimed and spread far and wide by records, pamphlets and newspapers; that there never was, and never could have been, either silence or mystery or secrecy, and above all, that the proceedings of the Convention itself do not contain a sentiment or an opinion, but what in other times and from the lips of other men, would be called patriotic and public spirited. Still, a generation has grown up into active and useful life since that period, and as the declaimers and writers against the Convention have never thought proper to publish in their papers the transactions of that body, it is now believed that a brief history of it, accompanied by some notices of its members, would not be ill received by those, who either have not leisure or documents, or inclination to study its proceedings in great detail or at much length.]

[In the summer of 1814, the war, which before had not approached nearer than the great northern lakes, at length fell unexpectedly and in an alarming manner upon the borders of Massachusetts. The English in considerable force captured Castine, a small town at the mouth of the Penobscot, and in a short time had the absolute control of all that part of Maine, which lies to the eastward

of that great river. Intelligence was shortly received by express at Head Quarters in Boston, that the enemy was preparing to execute without delay a more extensive invasion, and it therefore became necessary to take measures of immediate and vigorous defence. Under these distressing and disastrous circumstances, CALEB STRONG, at that time Governor of the Commonwealth, resolved to assemble the members of the Legislature. The General Court accordingly met on the 5th day of October of the same year; and His Excellency commenced his Message, which subsequent events have made more important than any other Message that has been delivered in this country since the Independence, in the following words:— “Since your last adjournment such important changes have taken place in the state of our public affairs, and the war in which we have been unhappily involved has assumed an aspect so threatening and destructive, that the Council* unanimously concurred with me in opinion that an extraordinary meeting of the Legislature was indispensable.” We shall shortly see that a majority of the House of Representatives, without example since the existence of the State Government, entirely coincided in the opinions expressed by the Governor. Two days after the session began, on the 7th of October, a resolution approving of the Governor’s conduct as it related to the defence of the state, passed the House by a *vote of 222 to 59*. On the 13th of October another resolution, authorizing the Governor to raise ten thousand men for the defence of the State, passed the House by a *vote of 252 to*

* Honorable Benjamin Pickman, Jun. John Brooks, John Lord, James Lloyd, David Cobb, Oliver Fiske, Samuel Fales, George Bliss, and Nahum Mitchell.

71. And on the 16th of October the celebrated fifth resolution, authorizing the calling of a Convention at Hartford, passed the House of Representatives by a vote of *260 yeas to 90 nays.* The resolution is in the words following :—

"Resolved, That twelve persons be appointed as delegates from this Commonwealth to meet and confer with delegates from the other New England States, or any other, upon the subject of their public grievances and concerns ; and upon the best means of preserving our resources ; and of defence against the enemy ; and to devise and suggest for adoption by those respective States such measures as they may deem expedient ; and also to take measures, if they shall think it proper, for procuring a convention of delegates from all the United States, in order to revise the Constitution thereof, and more effectually to secure the support and attachment of all the people, by placing all upon the basis of fair representation."

On the 18th of October, the delegates from Massachusetts were chosen in a convention of the two Houses.

These votes are recorded, and as we are not disposed to allow the democratic papers to call the proceedings of the people of this State at that time the work of sorry factions, cabals, and intrigues, we shall give the votes of the counties of Massachusetts Proper in detail as they appear upon the Journals of the House.

The following are the yeas and nays given for the resolution :—

The county of Suffolk gave	32 yeas and	0 nays
" Essex	44 "	9 "
" Middlesex	18 "	17 "
" Norfolk	5 "	11 "
" Plymouth	9 "	3 "

The county of Bristol gave	13 yeas and 1 nays.
" Barnstable	4 " 2 "
" Worcester	36 " 11 "
" Hampshire	19 " 0 "
" Hampden	12 " 3 "
" Franklin	20 " 2 "
" Berkshire	14 " 8 "
	<hr/>
	226 yeas and 67 nays.

We have taken the votes of the House of Representatives as expressing more emphatically the voice of the people, and it appears that *three quarters of all the citizens of this Commonwealth were, in 1814, in favour of the Hartford Convention.* Shall we now be told that these citizens were tainted, corrupted, and held in bondage by plots, bribery, and prejudice? And does any man in the State believe, or will any man of any party now say, that half a dozen individuals led blindfold and muzzled for three years three quarters of the virtuous, intelligent, and independent people of Massachusetts? Nay, have continued, notwithstanding countless charges and accusations, any one of which would have amounted to a gross desertion and sacrifice of the welfare and interests of the State and Union, still to lead blindfold and muzzled this deluded people—*eight years, fellow citizens, of bondage and servitude!* Mark, reader, the result. These weak and degenerate men, gave for this Caleb Strong, in the year 1815, the first year after the Hartford Convention, they gave him, we say, 50,921 votes, and the candidate of the other party, the honorable Samuel Dexter, 43,938 votes, as great a relative majority as he had received the year before; and since the year 1816 they have continued to give to John Brooks, “the rebel general,” a majority equally great in relative numbers. For eight years the people of this State

have each and every year confirmed, affirmed, and ratified the proceedings of the Hartford Convention. For eight years they have each and every year chosen for their rulers the authors and supporters of those measures ; and where is the man that will now stand out before the citizens, and say that the independent electors of Massachusetts have given their votes the whole of that time for rebels and traitors.

Here finish the public proceedings of Massachusetts as it regards her own domestic policy concerning the origin of the Hartford Convention. But Massachusetts manifested no desire either to conceal the transactions of her own government from the scrutiny of the whole nation, or to withhold from the States of the Union a cooperation in her own measures. The sense of her citizens was at that time well known, and in relation to the Hartford Convention, she adopted without delay that course of conduct, of which an eminent example had been given less than half a century before, and which, in this juncture of affairs, was especially desirable and judicious, from the vast magnitude of the subject and occasion. The two officers, who presided over her Senate and House of Representatives, were therefore directed to make known, as speedily as possible, to the different governments of the union, the proceedings of the government of this Commonwealth. We here insert at large the letter which was written on this occasion.

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.

Boston, October 17, 1814.

SIR—Your excellency will herewith receive certain resolutions of the Legislature of Massachusetts, which you are respectfully requested to take the earliest occasion to lay before the Legislature of your State, together with this letter, which is intended as an invitation to them, to appoint delegates, if

they shall deem it expedient, to meet such others as may be appointed by this and other States, at the time and place expressed in these resolutions.

The general objects of the proposed conference, are, first, to deliberate upon the dangers to which the eastern section of the Union is exposed by the course of the war, and which there is too much reason to believe will thicken round them in its progress, and to devise, *if practicable*, means of security and defence which may be consistent with the preservation of their resources from total ruin, and adapted to their local situation, mutual relations and habits, **AND NOT REPUGNANT TO THEIR OBLIGATIONS AS MEMBERS OF THE UNION.** When convened for this object, which admits not of delay, it seems also expedient to submit to their consideration, the inquiry, whether the interests of these States demand that persevering endeavours be used by each of them to procure such *amendments*, to be effected in the national constitution, as may secure to them equal advantage, and whether, if in their judgment this should be deemed impracticable, under the existing provisions for amending that instrument, an experiment may be made without disadvantage to the nation, for obtaining a Convention from all the States in the Union, or such of them as approve of the measure, with *a view to obtain such amendment.*

It cannot be necessary to anticipate objections to the measure which may arise from jealousy or fear. This Legislature is content, for its justification, to repose on the purity of its own motives, and upon *the known attachment of its constituents to the national union, and to the rights and independence of their country.*

We have the honor to be, with the highest respect, your Excellency's humble servants,

JOHN PHILLIPS, *President of the Senate
of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.*

TIMOTHY BIGELOW, *Speaker of the House
of Representatives of said Commonwealth.*

TO THE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF _____.

This letter is important, not only for the proper continuation and understanding of our history, *but it plainly proves that the same party which recorded its yeas in favor of the Union and the Constitution, in February, 1788, had diminished nothing of its respect and attachment, in October, 1814.*

The Delegates, to the number of twenty, from the States of Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island, and from parts of New Hampshire, and Vermont, assembled at Hartford, in December, 1814, and on the 4th of January, 1815, published a long Report; stating with great ability the opinions of the Convention, in relation to the construction of the Constitution of the United States. We do not expect that any man will, at the present time, take the trouble to read this Report, but it has heretofore been read with admiration, by the wisest men of all parties in this country; and whatever may be thought of one abstract point of constitutional law, discussed in it, we have never known any citizen, whatever might be his creed, as to the great questions of war and peace, and of State and federal powers, impute seditious or treasonable motives, or tendencies, either to the language or sentiments of the Report.

The Report concluded by recommending two Resolutions, urging the State Governments to solicit the consent of the United States to an arrangement, whereby the defence of the territory should be placed in the hands of the States. This was the substance of the resolutions, and it was also the substance of a law, incredible, and unlooked for, as it certainly was, which was enacted by the national government on the 27th day of January, 1815. We shall quote part of the first section, as we profess to deal in facts in this history. "*Be it enacted, &c.* That the President of the United States be, and he is hereby authorized and required to receive into the service of the United States,

any corps of troops, which may have been, or may be raised, organized, and officered under the authority of any of the States, whose term of service shall not be less than twelve months, which corps, when received into the service of the United States, shall be subject to the rules and articles of war, *and be employed in the State raising the same, or in an adjoining State, and not elsewhere, except with the assent of the Executive of the State so raising the same.*" Laws of the U. S. vol. 4. p. 778.

Now, we declare, and we appeal most solemnly to every honest man, who lived in those disastrous days, if the whole bone, and muscle, and marrow of the controversy, was not touching the exact and precise point which this law absolutely and entirely settled. We ask again, whether there would have been a Hartford Convention, if this law had been passed in January, 1814, instead of January, 1815. One more fact from the Journals of Congress, equally extraordinary with the one we have just recited, and equally abounding in testimony of the value, and patriotic, and virtuous views, of the Hartford Convention. On the 6th of February, (see Senate Journals) 1815, Mr. Varnum, a Senator from Massachusetts, made the following motion: "*Resolved*, That the Committee, to whom was referred that part of the President's Message of the 20th of September last, which relates to the military establishment, be instructed to inquire into the expediency of making provision by law, for the payment of the militia which have been called out by the authority of any State, for the defence of any part of the United States, against invasion, since the commencement of the present war, and *not taken into the pay of the United States*, and for reimbursing any State for any monies advanced for pay, rations, camp equipage, and all other expenses necessarily incurred in

calling out such militia, according to the rules and regulations prescribed by law, for defraying the expense of calling out the militia by authority of the United States." On the 10th of February, Mr. Giles, a Senator from Virginia, introduced a Bill in conformity with this instruction. It had three readings, and passed to be engrossed on the 18th of the same month, by the title of "An act to authorize the settlement and payment of certain claims for the services of the militia." This Bill was sent to the House of Representatives, but before it could go through a discussion, and the parliamentary forms, the news of peace arrived. What is this, we beg to inquire, but acknowledging in plain and direct terms, the justice and propriety of all the proceedings of New England, during the war. And how will any editor or statesman of the other party, say, that Massachusetts is not entitled to her militia compensation, and will never receive one pistareen of it under a federal administration; when, by the agency of two of the stoutest enemies of New England policy, the principle of remuneration was recognised during the administration of Caleb Strong, in Massachusetts, whose measures have since been so obnoxious to democratic reproach.

The Hartford Convention further recommended, that the States should propose seven amendments to the Constitution, for adoption by the State Legislatures. These amendments are all printed in the report, and when any democrat in Massachusetts, or Virginia, will declare that Samuel Adams, or Patrick Henry, was not in favor of similar alterations in the Constitution, and did not vindicate them at all hours of the day, we, in our turn, will admit that the amendments of the Hartford Convention are overflowing with sedition, disunion, and treachery.

At the meeting of the Legislature, in the winter session of 1815, a Report was made by a Committee, of which D. A. White was chairman, concerning the Hartford Convention, from which we shall extract one or two sentences:—"The expediency of having invited a convention of delegates from the New England States, is fully proved by the result of their labours communicated with his Excellency's Message."—"The Committee entertain a high sense of the wisdom and ability with which the convention of delegates have discharged their arduous trust; while they maintain the principle of State sovereignty, and of the duties which citizens owe to their respective State governments, *they give the most satisfactory proofs of attachment to the Constitution of the United States, and to the national Union.*"—Therefore,—“Resolved, That the Legislature of Massachusetts do highly approve the proceedings of the convention of delegates, from the States of Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island, and the Counties of Cheshire and Grafton, in the State of New Hampshire, and the County of Windham, in the State of Vermont, convened at Hartford, on the fifteenth day of December, in the year one thousand eight hundred and fourteen; and that the advice and recommendation therein given, are entitled to, and shall receive the most respectful consideration of this Legislature.”

“Resolved, That His Excellency the Governor, with the advice of Council, be, and he hereby is authorized and empowered to appoint three commissioners to proceed immediately to the seat of the National Government, and in pursuance of such instructions as His Excellency and the Honourable Council may think proper to give them, to make an earnest and respectful application to the Government of the United States, requesting their consent

to some arrangement, whereby the State of Massachusetts, separately, or in concert with neighbouring States, may be enabled to assume the defence of their territories against the enemy; and that to this end a reasonable portion of the taxes, collected within said States, may be paid into the respective Treasuries thereof, and appropriated to the payment of the balance due to the said States, and to the future defence of the same: the amount so paid into the said Treasuries, to be credited, and the disbursements so made, as aforesaid, to be charged to the United States; *and the Senators and Representatives of the Commonwealth, in Congress, are hereby requested to cooperate with said Commissioners in effecting this object.*" These resolutions were adopted by a *vote of 159 to 48* in the House of Representatives."

The Governor accordingly appointed three gentlemen to go to Washington without delay—whose commission is in the words following:—

"COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.

[L. S.] "To the Honourable Harrison G. Otis, Thomas H. Perkins, and William Sullivan, all of Boston, in the County of Suffolk, and Commonwealth aforesaid, Esquires.

"CALEB STRONG.

"GREETING.

"Whereas by a resolve of the Legislature of this Commonwealth, of the twenty-seventh day of this present month, the Governor, with the advice of Council, is authorized and empowered to appoint three Commissioners, to proceed immediately to the seat of the National Government, and in pursuance of such instructions as His Excellency the Governor, and the Honourable Council, may think proper to give them, to make earnest and re-

spectful application to the Government of the United States, requesting their consent to some arrangement, whereby the State of Massachusetts, separately, or in concert with neighbouring States, may be enabled to assume the defence of their territories against the enemy; and that to this end, a reasonable portion of the taxes, collected within said States, may be paid into the respective Treasuries thereof, and appropriated to the payment of the balance due to the said States, and to the future defence of the same; the amount so paid into the Treasuries to be credited, and the disbursements so made, as aforesaid, to be charged to the United States. And whereas, by said resolve, the Senators and Representatives of this Commonwealth, in Congress, are requested to co-operate with said Commissioners in effecting this object.

“ Now, therefore, by virtue of the Resolve aforesaid, and the power and authority thereby vested in me, I, CALEB STRONG, Governor of the said Commonwealth of Massachusetts, confiding in the ability, integrity, and patriotism, of the Honourable Harrison G. Otis, Thomas H. Perkins, and William Sullivan, Esquires, citizens of the said Commonwealth, have nominated, and with the advice and consent of the Council, do appoint you the aforesigned, the Honourable Harrison G. Otis, Thomas H. Perkins, and William Sullivan, Esquires, to be Commissioners for the purposes aforesaid, and with authority to do and perform whatever is directed and required in the said Resolve, a copy of which is hereunto annexed.

“ And you, the said Commissioners, will proceed immediately to the seat of the National Government, and in obedience to the requisitions of the Resolve aforesaid, and of instructions given you by the Supreme Executive of this State, a copy of which also accompanies

this commission, will make respectful and earnest application to the Government of the United States, requesting them to consent to some arrangement, by which this Commonwealth separately, or in concert with neighbouring States, may be enabled to assume the defence of their respective territories against the enemy ; and a portion of the taxes collected within said States may be paid into the respective Treasuries thereof, appropriated to the payment of the balance due to said States, and to the future defence of the same, the amount so paid into the said Treasuries, to be credited, and the disbursements so made, as aforesaid, to be charged to the United States. *And in your endeavours to effect this object, you will also consult with, and solicit the assistance and cooperation of the Senators and Representatives of this Commonwealth, in the Congress of the United States.*

“ In testimony whereof, I have caused the seal of this Commonwealth to be hereunto affixed, at Boston, this thirty-first day of January, A. D. one thousand eight hundred and fifteen, and in the thirty-ninth year of the Independence of the United States of America.

“ By His Excellency the Governor,
“ ALDEN BRADFORD,
“ *Secretary of the Commonwealth.*”

These gentlemen arrived in Washington one day after the news of the peace had reached that city. That circumstance was in itself the most successful accomplishment of their mission, but, that the Government was not only disposed but prepared to comply with every proposition, contained in the commission, we have already furnished abundant proofs in this brief history.

We have now related every fact concerning the Hartford Convention, and wherein lie the secrecy and mystery attributed to that body. The original and only Journal of the Convention is deposited in the Secretary of State's office in this city. It is always ready and open for the inspection and examination of every one, and has been read during the last month by many persons. Like the journal of all deliberative assemblies it is a record of propositions and votes. A copy of this journal, certified to be genuine by the Secretary of this Commonwealth, has been deposited in the printing office of the National Intelligencer, at Washington, and if it had been hung up on one of the pillars of the capitol, surely more publicity would not have been given to it. We also subjoin an attested copy of it at the end of this brief account. If it contains treason, sedition, or other inflammatory matter, why have not Messrs. Gales and Seaton, or some southern democratic editors, or some northern democratic editors, published it, or parts of it? And will the public ever believe that if it could have furnished the democratic editors of this State with the least jot or tittle of an argument or of a fact, that none of it during five years would ever have entered their presses? Are those gentlemen in the habit of manifesting that spirit of indulgence, courtesy, forbearance and consideration, to the faults and foibles of their adversaries? On the contrary, have they not shouted Hartford Convention, crucify him! crucify him! for eight years—and, forsooth, is it out of kindness and good feeling that they have abstained all that time from publishing this most foul and traitorous journal?

The printed Report of the Convention was publicly, and for several days, discussed in the Legislature—it was then published at the end of the Resolves of that session,

and it has from that time to this, passed in the form of a pamphlet through three editions. In that report you will find the political creed of the men who belonged to the Hartford Convention. By this they are willing now, and through all ages, to be judged. Do them, therefore, the justice to quote from a Report which they deliberately and solemnly wrote, and to which they have publicly set their names. If you wish to inform your political friends what Mr. Otis now believes, and what he believed and said in the Hartford Convention, publish that Report. How comes it, then, that HARRISON GRAY OTIS, and his associates, acting in obedience to instructions, *given* by three fourths of the people of this Commonwealth, were leagued together in 1814, in a base conspiracy to break down this great and vigorous Republic, *when in 1823, his political friends invite and beseech you, and the whole public, to judge and weigh him by the history and documents of that very Convention.*

Such is a short history of the Hartford Convention. How unjust, how unreasonable, how absurd, to impute to an assembly thus constituted, any secret or sinister design. The members of the Convention were appointed by different Legislatures, sitting in session many miles apart from each other, with open doors, and without concert or communication. Emphatically, "their breath was in their nostrils," and the Legislatures who appointed them, were destined to expire by the operations of their own Constitutions, before it could have been possible to mature a plan of insubordination.

The Report was regularly, and without delay, made to the Legislature, from whom they received their authority, and accepted by a vast majority, (159 to 48.) Here then obviously ends the individual responsibility of the Dele-

gates, except what belongs to them in common with all who voted in the General Court.

Mr. Otis and eleven gentlemen consented, in a time of extreme solicitude and public danger, distress, and difficulty, to accept a most unwelcome commission from the Legislature, from which no personal benefit or advantage could in any shape result. Regardless of the most intemperate language, and most violent threats, they performed the duty assigned to them, and rendered their account, which was fully and honourably accepted. The outcry now raised against the Convention is, therefore, in the nature of an appeal to the people themselves, for a judgment of entire approbation, delivered eight years ago; and constantly affirmed by every possible token and demonstration of respect, attachment, and confidence; of which circumstance, the following eleven brief biographical notices furnish most abundant and most unanswerable evidence.

George Cabot, of Boston, the President of the Convention. He has held no public office since that period, nor had he been in any political situation for many years before. Every body will admit that there is no office in this State for which he could not, in the case of vacancy, have received as full a vote as any man in Massachusetts, if he had had a desire to engage in public life.

Nathan Dane, of Beverly. He performed eminent services in Congress, and in the State Legislature, for many years; but he had withdrawn from public life, and was then, and has been since engaged in a most valuable vocation, the preparing of a digest of common law, adapted to this country. Mr. Dane possesses the respect, confidence, and esteem of all who know him, and, as his townsmen will

declare, might have been in the Legislature from that day to the present.

William Prescott, of Boston. He has been a Counsellor a Senator, or a Representative, whenever his business permitted him to be so. He was a member of the late State Convention, and at present presides in the Common Council of this City, as we understand, by a unanimous vote.

Harrison Gray Otis, of Boston. He was chosen the two years succeeding the Convention, a member of the Legislature, and in the second year he was elected by a unanimous vote of the political party with which he acted, Senator of the United States ; and he has just been recommended by a federal Convention of the Legislature, to the suffrages of the citizens, for the office of Governor.

Timothy Bigelow, of Medford. He was constantly returned to the General Court, and was constantly elected Speaker of the popular branch ; and having resigned that office, he was chosen into the Council.

Joshua Thomas, of Plymouth. He held an office in Plymouth County, incompatible with a seat in the Legislature. He was the upright, popular, and honoured Judge of Probate, to the time of his lamented death.

Joseph Lyman, of Northampton. He also is ineligible to a seat in the Legislature ; he is the Sheriff of Hampshire, and discharges the duties of that office to the acceptance of the people. He was a member of the State Convention, and was lately nominated by the federal Convention as candidate for the office of Lieutenant Governor, which he declined.

Daniel Waldo, of Worcester. He has been returned to the Senate of the State whenever his business permitted him so to be. He possesses, at this moment, entire respect and consideration, not only in his place of residence, but throughout the Commonwealth.

Hodijah Baylies, of Dighton. Also a Judge of Probate in the County of Bristol—an aid-de-camp to a distinguished General officer during the revolution. Ask any man in Bristol if he is surpassed in popular esteem by any other citizen ? There can be but one opinion.

George Bliss, of Springfield. He has, also, been again and again a member of the government, and was distinguished in the State Convention. He possesses in a high degree, the confidence of the people.

Samuel S. Wilde, of Newburyport. He has since that time been appointed a Judge of the Supreme Judicial Court. He was, also, a member of the late State Convention. Judge Wilde is beloved and respected, and possesses the attachment and confidence of the people.

These are all the members now resident in Massachusetts *proper*.

Now, with the utmost earnestness and sincerity, we ask any candid, honest man, if he believes in his conscience, that these eleven persons above named, were capable of plotting a conspiracy against the national government—of exciting to a civil war—of leading to a dissolution of the the Union—of submitting to an allegiance to George the Third ? We ask again, if these very identical persons are not precisely such men as the people and the public, upon all occasions, do honourably and confidently trust and employ ? And for the last time, we ask the candid and honest men of this State, if the people and the public have not from year to year given proof and evidence not to be denied or refuted, that they utterly and totally disregard the numberless misrepresentations and mistakements which violent men have laboured for eight years to cast upon the conduct and characters of these virtuous, upright, enlightened, and patriotic individuals ?

SECRET JOURNAL

OF THE

HARTFORD CONVENTION.

HARTFORD, THURSDAY, DEC. 15, 1814.

This being the day appointed for the meeting of the Convention of Delegates from the New England States, assembled for the purpose of conferring on such subjects as may come before them, the following persons, from those States, met in the Council Chamber of the State House, in Hartford, in the State of Connecticut, viz. :—

From the State of Massachusetts, GEORGE CABOT, WILLIAM PRESCOTT, HARRISON GRAY OTIS, TIMOTHY BIGELOW, NATHAN DANE, GEORGE BLISS, JOSHUA THOMAS, HODIJAH BAYLIES, DANIEL WALDO, JOSEPH LYMAN, SAMUEL S. WILDE, and STEPHEN LONGFELLOW.

From the State of Rhode Island, MESSRS. DANIEL LYMAN, BENJAMIN HAZARD, and EDWARD MANTON.

From the State of Connecticut, MESSRS. CHAUNCEY GOODRICH, JAMES HILLHOUSE, JOHN TREADWELL, ZEPHENIAH SWIFT, NATHANIEL SMITH, CALVIN GODDARD, and ROGER M. SHERMAN.

From the State of New Hampshire, MESSRS. BENJAMIN WEST, and MILES OLICUTT.

Upon being called to order by Mr. Cabot, the persons present proceeded to choose, by ballot, a President—

Messrs. Bigelow and Goodrich were appointed to receive and count the votes given in for that purpose, who reported that **Mr. GEORGE CABOT**, a member from Massachusetts, was unanimously chosen.

On motion, voted, that the Convention proceed to the choice of a person to be their Secretary, who is not a member of the Convention; and the votes having been received and counted, **THEODORE DWIGHT**, of Hartford, was declared to be chosen unanimously.

Messrs. Otis, Hillhouse, and Lyman, were appointed a committee to examine the credentials of the members returned to serve in the Convention, and report the names of such as they should find duly qualified; who, having attended to the subject of their said appointment, made the following report:—

The Committee appointed to examine the credentials of the members returned to serve in the Convention now assembled at Hartford, have attended to that service, and find the following persons to have been elected members thereof by the respective Legislatures of the following States;—From *Massachusetts*, George Cabot, William Prescott, Harrison Gray Otis, Timothy Bigelow, Stephen Longfellow, Daniel Waldo, George Bliss, Nathan Dane, Hodijah Baylies, Joshua Thomas, Joseph Lyman, and Samuel S. Wilde. From *Rhode Island*, Daniel Lyman, Samuel Ward, Benjamin Hazard, and Edward Manton. From *Connecticut*, Chauncey Goodrich, James Hillhouse, John Treadwell, Zephaniah Swift, Calvin Goddard, Nathaniel Smith, and Roger Minot Sherman.

The Committee also report, that at a conventional meeting of twenty towns in the County of Cheshire, in the State of New Hampshire, Hon. Benjamin West was elected to meet in this Convention; and at a conventional meeting of delegates from most of the towns in the County of Grafton, and from the town of Lancaster, in the County of Coos, Miles Olcott, Esq. was elected to meet in this Convention; and the Committee are of opinion, that the above named persons are entitled to take their seats as members of this Convention.

On motion, voted, that said report be accepted and approved.

On motion of Mr. Otis, voted, that the Convention be opened with prayer, and that the delegation from the State of Connecticut be requested to invite a clergyman belonging to the town of Hartford, to perform that service.

On motion, voted, that Messrs. Goddard, Bigelow, and Lyman, be a committee to prepare rules of proceeding for this Convention.

The Convention was opened with prayer by the Rev. Dr. Strong, of Hartford.

On motion, voted, that this Convention be adjourned to 3 o'clock, P. M. of this day, then to meet at this place.

THURSDAY, DEC. 15, 3 o'clock, P. M.

The Convention met agreeably to adjournment.

The Committee appointed to prepare rules of proceeding, proper to be observed by this Convention, &c. made the following report.

The Committee appointed to prepare rules and orders, proper to be observed by this Convention, during its continuance, ask leave to report the following; which are respectfully submitted,

CALVIN GODDARD, *Per Order.*

1. The meetings of this Convention shall be opened each morning, by prayer, which it is requested may be performed, alternately, by the Chaplains of the Legislature of Connecticut, residing in the city of Hartford.

2. The most inviolable secrecy shall be observed by each member of this Convention, including the Secretary, as to all propositions, debates, and proceedings thereof, until this injunction shall be suspended, or altered.

3. The Secretary of this Convention is authorized to employ some suitable person to serve as a door-keeper and messenger, together with a suitable assistant, if necessary, neither of whom are, at any time, to be made acquainted with any of the debates or proceedings of the board.

4. That the President of this Convention be authorized to regulate and direct the debates and proceedings thereof, in such manner as may seem to him discreet and proper, and to name all their committees.

On motion, voted, that said report be accepted and approved.

On motion, voted, that a committee of five be appointed to inquire what subjects will be proper to be considered by this Convention, and report such propositions for that purpose, as they may think expedient, to the Convention, to-morrow morning.

The following persons were appointed on that committee. Messrs. Goodrich, Otis, Lyman, of R. I. Swift, and Dane.

On motion, voted, that this Convention be adjourned to 10 o'clock to-morrow morning; then to meet at this place.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 16, 1814.

The Convention met, agreeably to adjournment.

The Convention was opened with prayer, by the Rev. Dr. Strong.

Mr. Ward, a member from the State of R. I. attended, and took his seat in the Convention.

The Committee appointed to inquire what subjects will be proper to be considered by the Convention, and to report such propositions for that purpose, as they may think expedient, respectfully Report:

"That your Committee deem the following to be proper subjects for the consideration of the Convention:—The powers claimed by the executive of the United States, to determine, conclusively, in respect to calling out the militia of the States into the service of the United States; and the dividing the United States into military districts, with an officer of the army in each thereof, with discretionary authority from the executive of the United States, to call for the militia to be under the command of such officer.—The refusal of the executive of the United States to supply, or pay the militia of certain States, called out for their defence, on the grounds of their not having been called out under the authority of the United States, or not having been, by the executive of the State, put under the command of the commander over the military district.—The failure of the Government of the United States to supply and pay the militia of the States, by them admitted to have been in the United States' service.—The Report of the Secretary of War to Congress,

on filling the ranks of the army, together with a bill, or act, on that subject.—A bill before Congress, providing for classing and drafting the militia.—The expenditure of the revenue of the nation in offensive operations on the neighbouring provinces of the enemy.—The failure of the Government of the United States to provide for the common defence; and the consequent obligations, necessity and burdens, devolved on the separate States, to defend themselves; together with the mode, and the ways and means, in their power for accomplishing the object.”

On motion, voted, that said Report be accepted and approved. On motion, voted, that a committee of three be appointed to obtain such documents and information as may be necessary for the use and consideration of the Convention, and may be connected with their proceedings. Mr. Hillhouse, Mr. Bliss, and Mr. Hazard, were appointed on that committee. On motion, voted, that the Rev. Dr. Perkins be invited to attend in turn with the other gentlemen already invited, as chaplains. On motion, voted, that the injunction of secrecy, as to the proceedings of yesterday, be removed. On motion, voted, that the Convention be adjourned to 3 o'clock, P. M. of this day, then to meet in this place.

Three o'clock, P. M.—The Convention met agreeably to adjournment. After spending the afternoon in various discussions of important subjects, on motion, voted, that this Convention be adjourned till to-morrow, 10 o'clock, A. M. then to meet at this place.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 17, 1814.

The Convention met, agreeably to adjournment.

The Convention was opened with prayer, by the Rev. Dr. Strong. After spending the forenoon in discussing the first section of the Report of the Committee made on Friday, on motion, voted, that when this Convention adjourn, it be adjourned till Monday next. On motion, voted, that this Convention be adjourned till Monday next, at 10 o'clock, A. M. then to meet at this place.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 19, 1814.

The Convention met, agreeably to adjournment. The Convention was opened with prayer, by the Rev. Mr. Chase.

On motion, voted, that a committee of five be appointed to prepare and report a general project of such measures as it may be proper for this Convention to adopt.

Messrs. Smith, Otis, Goddard, West, and Hazard, were appointed to be of that committee.

On motion, voted, that this Convention be adjourned till 3 o'clock, this afternoon, then to meet at this place.

Three o'clock, P. M.—The Convention met agreeably to adjournment. On motion, voted, that the Rev. Mr. Cushman be invited to attend in turn with the other gentlemen already invited, as chaplains.

After spending the afternoon in discussing the Report of the Committee, on motion, voted, that this Convention be adjourned till to-morrow morning, 10 o'clock, then to be held at this place.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 20, 1814.

The Convention met, agreeably to adjournment. The Convention was opened with prayer, by the Rev. Dr. Strong. The Committee appointed to prepare and report a general project of such measures as it may be proper for this Convention to adopt, made a report, which was laid in and read. After discussing several articles of the said Report, the further consideration of it was postponed until the afternoon. On motion, voted, that this Convention be adjourned till 3 o'clock, this afternoon, then to meet at this place.

Three o'clock, P. M.—The Convention met, pursuant to adjournment. The Convention resumed the consideration of the Report of the Committee, which was postponed in the forenoon; and after discussion through the afternoon, the same was postponed until the morning. On motion, voted, that this Convention be adjourned until to-morrow morning, 10 o'clock, A. M. then to meet at this place.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 21, 1814.

The Convention met, pursuant to adjournment. The Convention was opened with prayer, by the Rev. Mr. Chase. The Convention resumed the consideration of the Report postponed yesterday. After spending the time of the forenoon in discussion of the Report of the Committee, the further consideration was postponed to

the afternoon. On motion, voted, that this Convention be adjourned to 3 o'clock, this afternoon, then to meet at this place.

Three o'clock, P. M.—The Convention met, pursuant to adjournment. The Convention resumed the consideration of the Report of the Committee, which was postponed in the forenoon. On motion, voted, that a committee of seven be raised to prepare a Report illustrative of the principles and reasons which have induced the Convention to adopt the results to which they have agreed.—Mr. Otis, Mr. Smith, Mr. Sherman, Mr. Dane, Mr. Prescott, Mr. West, and Mr. Hazard, are appointed on that committee. On motion, voted, that this Convention be adjourned till to-morrow morning, 10 o'clock.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 22, 1814.

The Convention met, pursuant to adjournment. The Convention was opened with prayer, by the Rev. Dr. Perkins. The Convention resumed the consideration of the Report of the Committee, postponed last evening.—After spending the forenoon in discussing said Report, the further consideration was postponed till this afternoon.—On motion, voted, that this Convention be adjourned till 3 o'clock, then to meet at this place.

Three o'clock, P. M.—The Convention met, agreeably to adjournment. The Convention resumed the consideration of the Report of the Committee, which was postponed in the forenoon. After spending the afternoon in discussing said Report, the further consideration thereof was postponed. On motion, voted, that this Convention be adjourned till to-morrow morning, 10 o'clock, then to meet at this place.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 23, 1814.

The Convention met, pursuant to adjournment. The Convention was opened with prayer, by the Rev. Mr. Chase. The Convention resumed the consideration of the Report of the Committee, which was postponed yesterday. After spending the forenoon in discussing the Report of the Committee, the further consideration thereof was postponed until to-morrow. On motion, voted, that

this Convention be adjourned until to-morrow morning, 10 o'clock, then to meet at this place.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1814.

The Convention met, pursuant to adjournment. The Convention was opened with prayer, by the Rev. Dr. Perkins. The President communicated an address from a number of citizens belonging to the County of Washington, in the State of New York, which was read. On motion, voted, that the said address be referred to the Committee appointed on the 21st inst.

The Convention resumed the consideration of the Report of the Committee, which was postponed yesterday. On motion, voted, that another member be added to the Committee appointed on the 21st inst. Mr. Sherman being necessarily absent. Mr. Swift was appointed on said Committee.

The Report of the Committee which was laid in on the 20th instant, having been under discussion at the several meetings of the Convention, and having been amended, was adopted, and referred to the committee appointed on the 21st, to report; which Report is as follows, viz.

The Committee appointed to prepare and report a general project of such measures as it may be proper for this Convention to adopt, respectfully report:

1. That it will be expedient for this Convention to prepare a general statement of the unconstitutional attempts of the Executive Government of the United States to infringe upon the rights of the individual States, in regard to the militia, and of the still more alarming claims to infringe the rights of the States, manifested in the letter of the Secretary of War, and in the bills pending before Congress, or acts passed by them, and also to recommend to the Legislatures of the States, the adoption of the most effectual and decisive measures, to protect the Militia and the States from the usurpations contained in these proceedings.

2. That it will be expedient, also, to prepare a statement, exhibiting the necessity which the improvidence and inability of the General Government have imposed upon the several States, of providing for their own defence, and the impossibility of their discharging this duty, and at the same time fulfilling the requisitions of the Ge-

neral Government; and also, to recommend to the Legislatures of the several States, to make provision for mutual defence, and to make an earnest application to the Government of the United States, with a view to some arrangement, whereby the States may be enable to retain a portion of the taxes levied by Congress, for the purposes of self defence, and for the reimbursement of expenses already incurred, on account of the United States.

3. That it is expedient to recommend to the several State Legislatures, certain amendments to the Constitution of the United States, hereafter enumerated, to be by them adopted and proposed. (The remainder of this article in the Report was postponed.

1. That the power to declare or make war, by the Congress of the United States be restricted.

2. That it is expedient to attempt to make provision for restraining Congress in the exercise of an unlimited power, to make new States, and admit them into this Union.

3. That the powers of Congress be restrained in laying embargoes, and restrictions on commerce.

4. That a President shall not be elected from the same State two terms successively.

5. That the same person shall not be elected President a second time.

6. That an amendment be proposed, respecting slave representation, and slave taxation.

On motion, voted, that this Convention be adjourned to Monday afternoon, three o'clock, then to meet at this place.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 26, 1814.

The Convention met, pursuant to adjournment. The Convention was opened with prayer, by the Rev. Mr. Woodbridge, of Hadley, Massachusetts. The Committee not being prepared to lay in their Report, on motion, voted, that this Convention be adjourned till to-morrow morning, ten o'clock, then to meet at this place.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 27, 1814.

The Convention met, pursuant to adjournment. The Convention was opened with prayer, by the Rev. Dr. Perkins. The Committee not being prepared to lay in their

Report, on motion, voted, that this Convention be adjourned till this afternoon, three o'clock, then to meet at this place.

Three o'clock, P. M.—The Convention met pursuant to adjournment. The Committee not being prepared to lay in their Report, on motion, voted, that this Convention be adjourned to to-morrow morning, ten o'clock, then to meet at this place.

'WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 28, 1814.

The Convention met, pursuant to adjournment. The Convention was opened with prayer, by the Rev. Mr. Chase. A certificate of the proceedings of a Convention in the County of Windham, in the State of Vermont, appointing the Hon. William Hall, jr. to represent the people of that County in this Convention, was read. On motion, voted, that the Hon. William Hall, jr. is entitled to a seat in this Convention ; and that the Hon. Mr. Olcott, of New Hampshire, be requested to introduce Mr. Hall, for the purpose of taking his seat.

Mr. Hall, a member from the County of Windham, in the State of Vermont, attended, and took his seat in the Convention. The Report of the Committee not being prepared, on motion, voted, that this Convention be adjourned to three o'clock, this afternoon ; then to meet at this place.

Three o'clock, P. M.—The Convention met pursuant to adjournment. The Report of the Committee not being prepared, upon motion, voted, that this Convention be adjourned to to-morrow morning, ten o'clock.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 29, 1814.

The Convention met, pursuant to adjournment. The Convention was opened with prayer, by the Rev. Dr. Strong. On motion, voted, that the following proposition be referred to the Committee appointed on the 21st instant.

“ That the capacity of naturalized citizens, to hold offices of trust, honour, or profit, ought to be restrained ; and that it is expedient to propose an amendment to the Constitution of the United States, in relation to that subject.”

The Report of the Committee not being prepared, on motion, voted, that this Convention be adjourned to three o'clock, this afternoon, then to meet at this place.

Three o'clock, P. M.—The Convention met, pursuant to adjournment. The Report of the Committee not being prepared, on motion, voted, that this Convention be ad-

journed till to-morrow morning, ten o'clock, then to meet at this place.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 30, 1814.

The Convention met, pursuant to adjournment. The Convention was opened with prayer, by the Rev. Dr. Perkins. The Committee appointed on the 21st instant presented their Report, which was read twice. The forenoon having been spent in reading the Report, on motion, voted, that this Convention be adjourned till three o'clock, this afternoon, then to meet at this place.

Three o'clock, P. M.—The Convention met, pursuant to adjournment. After spending the afternoon in discussing the Report, the subject was postponed. On motion, voted, that this Convention be adjourned till to-morrow morning, ten o'clock, then to meet at this place.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 31, 1814.

The Convention met, pursuant to adjournment. The Convention was opened with prayer, by the Rev. Mr. Chase. The Convention resumed the consideration of the Report, postponed yesterday. On motion, voted, that a Committee, to consist of three, be appointed to procure that part of the Report, which relates to the militia, printed confidentially. Messrs. Goodrich, Lyman, of Massachusetts, and Goddard, were appointed on that Committee. After having spent the forenoon in considering the Report, the further consideration thereof was postponed. On motion, voted, that this Convention be adjourned till half past two o'clock, this afternoon, then to meet at this place.

Three o'clock, P. M.—The Convention met, pursuant to adjournment. The Convention resumed the consideration of the Report of the Committee, which was postponed in the forenoon. After having spent the afternoon in discussing the Report of the Committee, the further consideration thereof was postponed. On motion, voted, that a Committee of three persons be appointed to ascertain what expenses have been incurred in this Convention, which it is necessary for them to defray, and to report the mode of discharging them. Mr. Goddard, Mr. Prescott, and Mr. Ward, were appointed on that Committee. On motion, voted, that the first eight pages of the Report, be recommitted to the Committee which reported it, to reconsider

the same. On motion, voted, that the same Committee report such documents and articles as they may think proper, to compose an Appendix to the Report.

On motion, voted, that this Convention be adjourned till Monday morning, ten o'clock, then to meet at this place.

MONDAY, JANUARY 2, 1815.

The Convention met, pursuant to adjournment. The Convention was opened with prayer, by the Rev. Mr. Chase. The Convention resumed the consideration of the Report of the Committee which was postponed from Saturday. After spending the forenoon in discussing the Report, the further consideration thereof was postponed. On motion, voted, that this Convention be adjourned till half past two o'clock, this afternoon, then to meet at this place.

Half past two o'clock, P. M.—The Convention met, pursuant to adjournment. The Convention resumed the consideration of the Report of the Committee which was postponed in the forenoon. After spending the afternoon in discussing the Report of the Committee, the further consideration thereof was postponed. On motion, voted, that this Convention be adjourned till to-morrow morning, nine o'clock, then to meet at this place.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 3, 1815.

The Convention met, pursuant to adjournment. The Convention was opened with prayer, by the Rev. Dr. Perkins. The Convention resumed the consideration of the Report of the Committee which was postponed yesterday. After spending the forenoon in discussing the Report of the Committee, the same was postponed till the afternoon. On motion, voted, that this Convention be adjourned till three o'clock, this afternoon, then to meet at this place.

Three o'clock, P. M.—The Convention met, pursuant to adjournment. The Convention resumed the consideration of the Report of the Committee, which was postponed in the forenoon. After discussing and amending the Report of the Committee, voted, that the same be accepted and approved. On motion, resolved, that the injunction of secrecy, in regard to all the debates and proceedings of this Convention, except in so far as relates to the Report

finally adopted, be, and hereby is, continued. On motion, voted, that a Committee of three persons be appointed to consider and report what measures it will be expedient to recommend to the States, for their mutual defence. Mr. Prescott, Mr. Wilde, and Mr. Manton, were appointed on the Committee.

On motion, voted, that Mr. Sherman be added to the Committee for superintending the printing of the Report. On motion, voted, that this Convention be adjourned till to-morrow morning, ten o'clock, then to meet at this place.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 4, 1815.

The Convention met, pursuant to adjournment. The Convention was opened with prayer, by the Rev. Mr. Chase. On motion, voted, that certain documents before the Convention, be published, with the following title, "*Statements prepared and published, by order of the Convention of Delegates, held at Hartford, Dec. 15, 1814, and printed by their order.*"

On motion, voted, that Mr. Goodrich be discharged from any further services on the Committee to superintend the printing of the Report, &c. On motion, voted, that another member be added to that Committee. Mr. Otis was appointed to that place. The Committee appointed to report what measures it will be expedient to recommend to the States, for their mutual defence, presented a Report, which was read. On motion, voted, that the said Report be accepted and approved. On motion, voted, that this Convention be adjourned till three o'clock this afternoon, then to meet at this place.

Three o'clock, P. M. The Convention met, pursuant to adjournment. On motion, voted, that two copies of the Report of the Convention, subscribed by all the members, who shall be disposed to sign the same, be forwarded to each of the Governors of the States of Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, and Vermont; one of which to be for the private use of the said Governors, and with a request that the other, at some proper time, may be laid before the Legislatures of the States aforesaid.

Mr. Goodrich submitted the following Resolution to the Convention. Resolved, That the thanks of the Conven-

tion be presented to the Hon. **GEORGE CABOT**, in testimony of the respectful sense they entertain of his conduct, whilst presiding over their deliberations.

On the question being put by the Secretary, it passed in the affirmative, *unanimously*. On motion, voted, that the Convention be adjourned till 7 o'clock, this evening, then to meet at this place.

Seven o'clock, P. M.—The committee met, pursuant to adjournment. On motion, voted, that the Report, as amended, and the Resolves accompanying the same, be accepted and approved. On motion, voted, that the Delegates from Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island, take two copies of the Report of the Convention, and deliver the same to the Governors of those States, agreeably to the vote of the Convention passed this day, and that the President be requested to transmit two copies of the Report to the Governors of the States of New Hampshire and Vermont, together with a copy of the vote of the Convention aforesaid.

On motion, voted, That at the close of the Convention, the Journal be committed to the care of the President. On motion, voted, That the Convention be adjourned till to-morrow morning, 9 o'clock, then to meet at this place.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 5, 1815—9 o'clock, A. M.

The Convention met, pursuant to adjournment—after solemn prayer, by the Rev. Dr. Strong, on motion, voted, that this Convention be adjourned without day.

ATTEST, **THEODORE DWIGHT**, *Secretary.*

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[CERTIFICATE.]

I, **GEORGE CABOT**, late President of the Convention, assembled at Hartford, on the fifteenth day of December, 1814, do hereby certify, that the foregoing is the original and only Journal of the proceedings of that Convention; and that the twenty-seven written pages, which compose it, and the printed report, heretofore published, comprise a faithful and complete record of all the motions, resolutions,

votes, and proceedings; of that Convention.—And I do further certify, that this journal has been constantly in my exclusive custody, from the time of the adjournment of the Convention, to the delivery of it into the office of the Secretary of this Commonwealth.

GEORGE CABOT.

Boston, Nov. 16th, 1819.



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